



# DEVELOPING TOGETHER

## SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

### INTRODUCTION

This document provides a short summary of the key activities and work carried out by the Teaching Partnership (TP) between April 2021 and March 2022. The vast majority of deliverables for 2021-23 that were identified at the Visioning Day in April 2021 have progressed exceptionally well, in spite of the pandemic, and are either embedded, or making good progress towards being embedded. Some previously identified priorities, like those that relate to recruitment strategies, have not yet fully developed, and some previously improved outcomes, such as statutory placement provision, have faced some setbacks this year. Additional areas of work have also developed, in most cases due to additional government funding, which allowed us to implement targeted short term improvement projects.

*"I encourage all partners to continue investing their time and expertise in the Social Work Teaching Partnership. It is important that we build on the clear successes we have achieved over the last four years so that we can all benefit from the economies and shared creativity that our collaboration brings"*  
-Ian Dodds, Director Children's Services, AFC

*"It is with pride and satisfaction that the evaluation of Teaching Partnerships concludes that their most important benefit has been the development of a culture of collaborative working between higher education institutions, local authorities and other partners in the way social work education is designed, planned and delivered"*  
- Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for Children & Families

### KEY THEMES

---

**Admissions & Curriculum**

---

**Placements & Practice Education**

---

**Recruitment**

---

**Retention & Workforce Development**

---

**Income Generation**

---

**Identity, Brand & Reputation**

---

# ADMISSIONS & CURRICULUM

- In 2021, 5 further TCs were appointed, resulting in a well-established group of 21 Teaching Consultants in total
- The People with Lived Experience (PLE) Group at the HEI remains relatively stable, with 10 PLEs actively involved with HEI activities such as admissions
- Entry requirements for the BA in social work course remain at 120 UCAS points (increased from 112 in 2018-19)
- The average entry tariff has also improved steadily, from 123.1 UCAS points in 2017-18, to 131.8 in 2018-19, 139.62 in 2019-20 and 139.95 in 2020-21
- Partner involvement in student suitability issues was agreed through the development of a new, more transparent Student Suitability Process
- Employability Skills Workshops for MSW and BA students were facilitated by a mixture of TCs and other employer representatives in February and March 2022
- The University's Fast Track Post Graduate Diploma (PgDip) remains popular amongst partners when sponsorship is available, in 2021 3 sponsored spaces were ringfenced for unqualified adults workers
- The HEI's PLE Group took part in the 'People with Lived Experience Film Project'.and all five films have now been completed
- The proportion of BA students graduating with a 2:1 or 1st increased from 44% in 17-18 to 59% in 19-20 to 62% in 2020-21
- The proportion of MSW students graduating with a distinction or commendation increased from 76% in 17-18 to 87% in 19-20, to 91% in 2020-21

*"As a module leader working with teaching consultants I very much welcome their involvement in keeping the module content relevant and practice focused.. Feedback from students is very positive about their involvement in the module"*



# PLACEMENTS & PRACTICE EDUCATION

- During 2021-22, the TP Practice Consultants were offsite PEs for 2 x students on the BA programme, as well as 6 x students on the MSW programme
- An adapted programme of 11 PE workshops were delivered across the year (up from 9 in 2020-21) to develop PE skills and knowledge. 158 experienced/trainee/aspiring PEs, OSSs and PAs have attended workshops to date
- The OSS programme has run three times in its new format across 3 half days, in January 2021, October 2021 and February 2022, with 30 OSSs in attendance from across the TP
- A 'deconstructed' virtual PE Conference was held in May 2021, over three separate sessions. The conference had 76 PEs in attendance from across the partnership
- On the whole, all partners are actively engaging in supporting placement allocation and the vast majority are attending the allocation meetings. This promotes a joined up approach to coordinating placements for students
- To date, three Peer QA panels have been held (June'21, November'21 and Feb'22) with representatives from a number of partner agencies taking part in these panels to discuss and review an anonymised sample of 10% of placement reports, as well as all fails and borderlines. The peer reviews provide balanced, considered, constructive and timely feedback to workforce development (WFD) leads about the quality of reports completed, with the aim to improve a benchmark quality standard for reports across the board
- The majority of students in 2020-21 were satisfied with the allocation process and overall most students felt their placements were good or excellent with a minority rating it as 'ok' and none 'poor' or 'very poor'

*"I felt mentally refreshed and motivated to take on a student."*

*"As with all of Josie's training, I enjoyed the fact that she is dynamic, interactive and holds my attention. I always come away with new learning. Many thanks."*

*"I have found the TP very helpful in my progress to becoming a PE. Staff and consultants have been very welcoming, engaging, helpful and supportive throughout my journey"*

# RECRUITMENT

- A subgroup of the TP - AfC, Sutton Children and Kingston University - was successful in its application to the DfE to form a new Regional Partnership (RP) and deliver Cohort 7 of the national Step Up to Social Work Programme. We have successfully recruited 9 individuals to complete the Step Up programme, who commenced their study at Kingston University on 4th January 2022 and will be completing x2 placements at their local authority of choice; London Borough of Sutton, or Achieving for Children Richmond & Kingston, or Windsor & Maidenhead
- A Student Internship Scheme was launched in Autumn 2020, where students on the MSW Programme could apply to have both their placements with a partner local authority and at the end of their course be guaranteed an interview for an NQSW position. In Autumn 2021 the scheme was once again offered to MSW students and 2 students were successfully appointed as interns with London Borough of Croydon Adults Services and London Borough of Sutton Children's Services
- The Social Work (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship was launched in 2020 and Kingston University was appointed principal provider to co-produce the programme for London and surrounding regions for use by all programme members. The University recruited 60 to their programme in 2020, exceeding their target of 55, and subsequently recruited 23 in 2021 from 18 local authorities (LAs) in London. Of the LAs involved, 5 are from the TP
- A new Careers Fair, planned collaboratively with the BA and MSW course leaders to maximise student attendance, was held in April 2022, all but two of the primary partner local authorities sent representatives
- 45% of NQSW positions across AfC and Sutton went to KU graduates in 2019-20 up from 12% in 2018

*"It is anticipated that promotion of various workforce development initiatives, such as the EPD Framework, Early Career Managers' Programme and the Career Pathways & CPD Framework, will influence recruitment of social workers, with prospective candidates being attracted to work in the region thanks to the comprehensive learning and development offer"*



# RETENTION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- A new Career Pathways & CPD Framework was launched in June 2021. The Framework was created through extensive consultation with primary partner agencies during 2020-21 and continually evolves as new opportunities are developed
- The Early Professional Development (EPD) Framework was also launched in June 2021 and commenced in September 2021. The EPD framework comes into effect at the end of the ASYE and provides EPD social workers with the support and opportunities they need to develop as practitioners in the coming years
- A new employer led Strengths Based Practice course was developed in collaboration with Kingston University, Kingston Adults and Merton Adults and delivered to 73 individuals from across partner agencies from June - December 2021
- A Kingston University 'PQ Development Day' took place at the end of April, to assess partner employers' post-qualifying needs and offer them the opportunity to contribute to the restructure of KU's post qualifying offer for social work
- A third cohort of our popular Early Career Managers' Programme was delivered in January 2022, to a further 12 practitioners from across the partnership
- Over 70 events and training sessions were delivered, commissioned or coordinated by the TP throughout 2021-22. Topics included; Attachment Theory: Putting it into Practice, Understanding the Liberty Protection Safeguards, KSS Reflective Workshop, Social Graces Workshop and Writing Reflectively for Your CPD with Social Work England
- The Black Lives Matter & The Voice of Social Work Discussion Groups have continued to prove popular amongst practitioners, offering black colleagues across the TP the opportunity to lead or co-facilitate some of these sessions
- In November '21, we hosted an 'Emotional Resilience & Wellbeing in Social Work Conference' which was our first in person event since before the pandemic
- In September 2021 Sharon Evans, TP Practice Consultant, established the Monthly Research Hub, with the aim of helping social workers from across the partnership to become more confident in getting involved in research
- The TP hosted its first 'Think Family' Conference, which was published as part of Social Work England's programme of events
- The TP held its second annual celebration event and awards ceremony, 'For the Love of Social Work: A Celebration and Awards Ceremony'

# INCOME GENERATION

- In August '21 the TP received an offer from the DfE to submit bids for their Continuous Improvement Fund. The total fund available was open to all Teaching Partnerships in the national network (at that time 24 in total) with a maximum amount available of £900k. The TP was successful in four out of five of bids put forward. The total grant awarded for the successful bids was £125,370, equivalent to 14% of the total fund available
- These bids include: Coaching & Mentoring Research, Social Worker Wellbeing, Trauma Informed Organisations and an Anti-Racist Practice Lead Post
- Coaching & Mentoring - 16 social workers across partner organisations were sponsored to complete a Level 7 post qualifying module in coaching and mentoring. This project is a collaboration with Kingston University and is based on research carried out by Suzanne Triggs, using coaching as an intervention with people with lived experience
- Social Worker Wellbeing - The Social Worker Wellbeing project addressed the need for an improved social worker wellbeing strategy within social work employers, with the Covid-19 pandemic introducing additional challenges. In November '21 some of the funding was used to host an in person 'Emotional Resilience & Wellbeing in Social Work Conference' at Kingston University. Elearning modules developed by Self Care Psychology are currently undergoing evaluation with a test group of social workers from Merton Adults. A password protected section was also created on the Teaching Partnership website to house a library of resources on wellbeing for practitioners to be able to access
- Trauma Informed Organisations - the objective of this project was to set up the infrastructure to enable us to roll out core Trauma Informed Practice training at Level 1 - Trauma Aware - to all qualified social workers within our Teaching Partnership through a train the trainer model. There are 13 cohorts scheduled to run in the next 8 months, being delivered by the 12 upskilled facilitators, which will enable 260 practitioners to access the training

# INCOME GENERATION

- Anti-Racist Practice - The Anti Racist Practice Lead project addressed the need for partner organisations to embed anti-racist practice with children, families and adults through a dedicated Anti Racist Practice Lead post. An individual was identified from within the London Borough of Sutton to take some of the functions of the post forward on a part time basis, 2 days a week. Andrea Bryant is currently a Service Manager within Sutton Children and she will now also be their Diversity & Inclusion Lead. Whilst Andrea is employed by Sutton, she will work on initiatives and the development of resources that will benefit the whole Teaching Partnership
- In September'21 the Strategic Board agreed that places on the TP CPD provision could be sold to external organisations, as a means of income generation. It was agreed that on average, this would be capped at around 20% of the total available provision on each course, to ensure that primary partners were not disadvantaged
- To date, we have generated approximately £30,000 in income since March 2021 by selling our CPD provision externally and aim to improve this throughout 2022-23 by continuing to promote our offer to external agencies. The most lucrative course is the popular Early Career Manager's programme which generates a significant income for the TP and there is currently interest from a couple of external local authorities in commissioning this in 2022
- Alongside Kingston University, London Borough of Sutton and Achieving For Children, the TP Team successfully bid for cohort 7 of the Step Up to Social Work Programme, securing funding of £48,000 for the administration and coordination of the programme which was provided by the TP Team in order to retain this funding and reinvest into the TP. We will again look to submit applications for cohort 8 in 2023



# IDENTITY BRAND & REPUTATION

- The TP website is a rich resource hub, with over 26,000 visits in the last year, and this figure is increasing each month
- The TP maintains a strong and active social media presence on Twitter. Since the last annual progress report, the TP's following has increased from 668 to 860 followers!
- Regular newsletters continue to be circulated, ensuring those within the region stay up to date on the key activities and ways to get involved with the TP and other organisations
- We have been invited to attend the Social Work Teaching Partnership Advisory Group (SWTPAG) led by the DfE, with 6 other Teaching Partnerships
- The TP established a Pan-London Network for London TP's to collaborate and share on specific initiatives relevant to the region, with three meetings held to date
- Contributed to Social Work England's Programme of Events as part of Social Work Week, delivering an in-person conference on 'Attachment Theory Throughout the Lifecourse', with key experts in the field delivering sessions to 39 practitioners
- Held our annual social work celebration event and awards ceremony, 'For the Love of Social Work: A Celebration and Awards Ceremony'. The event was well attended with over 55 practitioners and students in attendance
- In 2021, the TP was selected by the DfE to establish, manage and quality assure a new National Teaching Partnership document library, which has been set up on Sharepoint
- The TP team took part in cross-TP Action Learning Sets, a Continuous Improvement Fund project submitted by another TP
- Shared information with key professional and regulatory bodies and networks to promote our achievements. For example, we were asked by Social Work England to write a blog about our experience of developing our popular Early Career Manager's programme
- The TP was also invited to present the Career Pathways & CPD Framework and the Early Professional Development Framework to the Social Work Education Network, chaired by Skills for Care



# CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- The two-tier membership structure should continue. There are many moving parts to the programme and numerous activities in flight at any one time and the current arrangements are proving to work well in terms of communication, understanding, engagement and decision making
- In light of the recent confirmation that the DfE will provide further funding for the National SWTP Programme, those agencies who pay an annual membership fee should use this report as a basis for reviewing their return on investment and identifying their own savings that have resulted from the TP. Even with the DfE funding and the independent income that the TP generates, it would not be possible to sustain the TP beyond March 2023 in its current form without this contribution
- All primary partner agencies (Achieving for Children, Croydon Adults, Kingston Adults, Merton Children, Merton Adults, Sutton Children, Sutton Adults, Wandsworth Children, NSPCC, Welcare and Kingston University) should attend the annual Visioning Day, where future priorities are agreed. It is also essential for a consistent senior leader from within each agency to attend the quarterly Strategic Board
- The TP should continue to take advantage of how accustomed those across the TP have become to working virtually, moving the majority of governance meetings online to enable maximum attendance and reduce the administrative burden on partners. This should also be extended to the CPD offer, taking a blended approach to learning, with a mixture of online and face to face provision
- The TP should further build on engaging with and sharing information with key professional and regulatory bodies and networks to promote its achievements and communicate future priorities within the sector.
- The TP should continue to actively seek out opportunities that will provide additional income, to ensure the sustainability of the partnership and less reliance on the DfE funding should this cease to be available in the future.

# FUTURE AMBITIONS

## **Some potential new areas of focus for the coming year/s include:**

- Enhancing the strategy for research in practice and supporting partners to become 'learning organisations'
- Developing our aspiring and experienced managers
- Further promoting the coaching and mentoring scheme to increase awareness
- Building on and growing the current student internship scheme
- Conducting a skills gap analysis to understand more about the learning and development needs of practitioners across the TP
- Strategising to create more roles for social workers who would like to progress, not limited to linear progression through management, with new job titles, responsibilities and reward package
- Pursuing the proposal to implement national 'Social Work Agency Rules' with the DfE
- Developing a TP or Pan-London jobs site
- Enhancing our Think Family approach, supporting partners to understand more about each other's business and breaking down barriers
- Strengthening the promotion and marketing of KU's new post qualifying offer, raising awareness of what is available to practitioners who want to develop
- Liaising with another TP working with Research in Practice (RiP) to adapt the Practice Supervisor Development Programme (PSDP) for aspiring black social work managers
- Supporting partners to meet the requirements of the new Care Quality Commission's Inspection Framework
- ASYE development, including aligning practices across the TP and exploring what more can be done to support ASYE Assessors